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ABSTRACT

Summarized briefly is the research conducted at the University of Texas on the concerns of teachers. Two branches of research have been pursued. The distinction lies in the type of assessment used. The first, the Teacher Concerns Statement (TCS), an open-ended free-response instrument, asks the question: "When you think about your teaching, what are you concerned about?" The second instrument, the Teacher Concerns Checklist (TCCL), asks the same question as the TCS and is followed by a list of 56 items. The subject responds by placing a check under one of five categories representing the degree of concern felt. Studies of the TCS and TCCL have led to the conclusion that teachers are most concerned about: self-survival, teaching, impact on pupils, and about the teaching situation. The TCCL promises to be a viable research instrument, largely because of its improvement over the earlier TCS in terms of reliability and increased ease in scoring. (BC)

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Concerns of Teachers: Recent Research on Two Assessment Instruments

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This paper is to be presented at the 1974 meetings of the American Educational Research Association. It was listed in the AERA Program under the title, "Concerns of Teachers: Research and Reconceptualization". The paper bearing that title can be obtained from the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas at Austin, or from ERIC.

The purpose here is to summarize briefly the research on the concerns of teachers that has taken place at The University of Texas under the direction of Frances F. Fuller since the publication of the 1969 AERJ article "Concerns of Teachers: A Developmental Conceptualization".[3]

Basically, two branches of research have been pursued. The distinction between them lies in the type of assessment instrument used. The first branch used an open-ended free-response instrument called the "Teacher Concerns Statement".[4] Each teacher responded in writing to the following question: "WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR TEACHING, WHAT ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT? (Do not say what you think others are concerned about, but only what concerns you now.) Please be frank."

This instrument has been content analyzed using a variety of scoring systems.[2,4,5,7] The system used to derive the scores discussed

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here and reported elsewhere[4,5] includes the following six categories. The first three were intended to represent self-benefit or self-survival concerns.

Concern about Role. Where Do I Stand? Statements about the subject's place in the psychological, social, and physical environment of the classroom, school, or community: about being evaluated, about rules, administrative policy, resources available, and so on.

Concern about Adequacy. How Adequate Am I? Statements about one's own adequacy as a teacher or as a person, including statements about discipline and subject matter adequacy.

Concern about Being Liked or Liking. How Do Pupils Feel About Me? What Are Pupils Like? Statements about personal, social, and emotional relationships with pupils including the pupils' feelings toward the teacher and the teacher's feelings toward the pupils.

The following three categories were intended to represent pupil-benefit concerns.

Concern about Teaching. Are Pupils Learning What I'm Teaching? Statements about the subject's teaching performance and about whether pupils are learning material selected for them.

Concern about Pupil Needs. Are Pupils Learning What They Need? Statements about what pupils need, about whether pupils are learning what they need, and about teaching methods and other means, inside the classroom, to that end.

Concern about Educational Improvement. How Can I Improve Myself as a Teacher and Improve All That Influences Pupils? Statements about

means for improving the lot of pupils, about the subject's own personal and professional development, about ethics, educational issues, community problems, and other events outside the classroom related to pupils learning what they need.

The concerns model described elsewhere[3] predicted that concerns about teaching change over time and mature with experience. Self-survival concerns were hypothesized to be related to inexperience and pupil-benefit concerns to be related to experience in teaching. The numerically increasing scores 1,2,3,4,5, and 6 were assigned to the concern categories in the order in which these kinds of concern were hypothesized to develop. That is the self-concern categories Role, Adequacy, and Liking were scored 1,2, and 3, respectively; and the pupil-concern categories Teaching, Pupil Needs, and Educational Improvement were scored 4,5, and 6, respectively. The justification for assigning these numeric scores to the various category codes rests on very tenuous ground since two unproven assumptions are being made--that concerns occur in a developmental sequence and that the scoring categories comprise an equal interval scale.

In addition to the six category scores mentioned the following scores were calculated for each teacher subject: mode, mean, median, highest and lowest (numerically) concern score, range and number of coded concerns. The modal concern score, selected on the basis of its nearly normal distribution, was used in a 2 x 2 analysis of variance (male, female: preservice, inservice). As predicted, the concerns of inservice teachers--both male and female-- were significantly higher

(that is, more pupil-benefit concern oriented) than were those of preservice teachers ($p < .0001$). The concerns of men and women did not differ, nor was any interaction between sex of teacher and stage of teaching (preservice vs. inservice) indicated.[5]

These results were checked by separate analyses of each of the concern category scores using nonparametric techniques and are reported in detail elsewhere.[5] Briefly, it was found that, consistent with predictions, significantly more preservice than inservice teachers expressed two of the three self-benefit concerns--Adequacy and Liking. Also consistent with predictions, more inservice than preservice teachers expressed pupil-benefit concerns--Pupil Needs and Educational Improvement. No significant score differences were found between preservice and inservice teachers for the remaining two concern categories-Role and Teaching Task.

Encouraged by these differences in the predicted direction, analyses were run in order to test whether the relationship between experience and type of concern held up <u>within</u> preservice and inservice groups. The modal concern scores for 1028 preservice teachers were used in a 2 x 6 analysis of variance (male, female; stage of teaching). Six stages of preservice training were identified: "1) <u>No</u> classroom teaching experience and <u>no</u> previous education course work; 2) Education course work but <u>no</u> classroom teaching experience; 3) Presently observing in the classroom (which may or may not include limited teaching) <u>and</u> taking education course work; 4) Completed observation in the classroom and presently taking course work; 5) Presently student teaching; and 6) Completed student teaching but <u>not</u> yet an inservice teacher."

Neither main effects nor interactions were detected.[5] One

conclusion that might be drawn from this analysis is that preservice teachers form a rather homogeneous group with respect to concern categories. An alternative explanation is that the Teacher Concerns Statement is simply not a sufficiently powerful instrument to detect any but gross differences, such as the preservice-inservice differences reported above.

An analogous analysis was run for 265 inservice teachers to test the hypothesis that there is a monotonically increasing relationship between years of teaching experience and concern category. This regression analysis produced no evidence to support the proposition that increasing teaching experience was related to concern categories hypothesized to be more mature. However, in breaking the samples down further, it was found that, for the male subsample of inservice teachers, concerns were related to number of years teaching experience as predicted. No significant relationship was found for female inservice teachers.

Inservice teachers were broken down also according to elementary vs. secondary teachers. It was predicted that elementary teachers would be less concerned than secondary teachers about many of the typical self-benefit concerns since the pupils on that level were considerably younger. For example, discipline and subject matter competency were hypothesized to be of less concern for elementary teachers than for secondary teachers. However, no significant differences were found.[5]

The results of the above regression analyses may be summarized as follows. If no classifications are imposed on inservice subjects, then the modal concern score was not related to teaching experience. If,

however, inservice subjects were further characterized by sex, then male subjects' modal concern scores tended to increase (mature) with increasing experience. Female modal concern scores remained constant over experience. Finally, when inservice subjects were characterized by elementary or secondary level, the modal concern score remained constant for all years of experience for both elementary and secondary groups of teachers.

On the basis of frequency of occurrence and coder agreement and stability, two Teacher Concerns Statement scoring categories were candidates for elimination--Concern about Being Liked and Concern about Educational Improvement. Since responses in the Concern about Role and the Concern about Adequacy categories appeared to stick together in the factor analyses, these two categories were combined. The remaining three-category concern sequence hypothesized was this: Role and Adequacy concern categories representing Self-Benefit Concern; the Task Concern category standing alone, neither wholly pupil-oriented nor wholly self-benefit oriented; and the Pupil-Benefit category represented by the former Pupil Needs category. The protocols of 1028 preservice and 265 inservice teachers were then rescored on the basis of these three new categories: Role and Adequacy Concerns scored "1", Task Concern scored "2", and Pupil-Benefit Concern scored "3".[5] These scores were then factor analyzed separately for the preservice (N = 1028) and inservice (N = 265) samples.

The results indicate that all three variables are required to describe the concerns of the entire sample studied. Preservice teachers

concern themselves primarily with a single dimension, which might be called the survival dimension. They ask on the one hand "Can I do it" (Self-Benefit) and on the other, "How can I do it" (Teaching-Task).

The concerns of inservice can be ordered on two dimensions, neither of which is identical to the preservice survival dimension. The first inservice dimension is a self-benefit--pupil-benefit dimension. The second inservice dimension is a performance (Teaching Task) dimension, "How do I do it".

The Teacher Concerns Checklist

The second branch of research pursued is deeply rooted in the frustrations we experienced in working with the Teacher Concerns Statement. As is true of many (if not most) content coded instruments, serious problems in reliability were encountered--especially coder agreement and stability deficiencies.[5,7] Using the actual subject responses to the Teacher Concerns Statement in conjunction with the information gleaned from factor analyses of the TCS as guideposts, items were constructed for the Teacher Concerns Checklist. The second version of this instrument, the TCCL-B, was administered to 335 preservice teachers (undergraduate education majors) in three southwestern universities and to 345 inservice teachers in the Austin Independent School District, Austin, Texas. The instructions for this instrument are similar to those in the Teacher Concerns Statement. The first page of the TCCL-B reads:

TEACHER CONCERNS CHECKLIST

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR TEACHING, WHAT ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT?

I am concerned about:

These instructions are followed by a list of 56 items. The subject responds by placing a check under one of the five categories representing the degree of concern felt: "Not concerned at all", "slightly concerned", "Moderately concerned", "Very concerned", and "Extremely concerned."[6] Analyses which were performed indicate that the TCCL-B is a vast improvement over the open-ended content analysis scored Teacher Concerns Statement.[6] Possibly the two most important improvements are enhanced reliability and increased ease in scoring. Coder agreement and stability are no longer issues since the TCCL-B is key or machine scored. From intercoder agreement that peaked at .62 (N = 48) and coder stability (two week code-recode) ranging from .24 (n.s.) to .85 (N = 48),[5] the TCCL-B promises 1.0 for both, provided computer programs and computers (or scoring keys) are used appropriately. The TCCL-B has coefficients of internal consistency (alphas) ranging from .79 to .91 (N = 335) and one-week test-retest stability coefficients ranging from .77 to .87 (N = 44).[1,6]

A third advantage of the TCCL-B over the TCS is its greater tendency toward normality of distribution. None of the category scores for the Teacher Concerns Statement distributed normally, for reasons discussed elsewhere.[5] One of the three subscales on the TCCL-B distributes normally.[6]

Three factors emerged using the TCCL-B. These were named Self-Concern, Situational Concern, and Student-Needs (Impact) Concern. Self-Concern items are about self-survival, about insufficient skills or information, about discipline problems, about being evaluated, about

being liked, and about presenting information adequately. The last example is especially true for preservice teachers. The second factor, Situational Concern, taps concern about elements in the teaching situation that can interfere with or prevent effective teaching. Some examples are: concern about insufficient instructional materials, about lack of time to prepare lessons, about lack of time generally, about inflexibility in the situation, about lack of freedom to be innovative, about having too many pupils, and about becoming personally involved with pupils. The third factor, the Student-Needs (Impact) Concern factor, has to do chiefly with recognizing needs of individual pupils and adapting self, teaching methods, and procedures in an attempt to meet these needs. This factor will henceforth be referred to as the "Impact" Concern factor.

Using TCCL-B factor scores, preservice as compared with inservice teachers were concerned about Self-Concerns as predicted. Inservice teachers were more concerned about Situational Concerns than were preservice teachers. This is not surprizing in view of the item content. The Situational Concern factor should not be confused with Task Concerns as defined by the Teacher Concerns Statement scoring system. No item ove overlap is present.

On the basis of earlier research it was expected that inservice teachers would report greater concern about impact than would preservice teachers, but this was not the case. No significant differences were found between the two groups of teachers. Four possible explanations are suggested. First, the TCCL-B includes several items that would be

considered Task Concerns using the Teacher Concerns Statement coding system. As reported earlier, the Task Concerns category did not discriminate between preservice and inservice teachers. Therefore, it is possible that these items may have influenced the results in the direction of less difference between preservice and inservice teachers on the Impact factor.

The second explanation is that preservice and inservice teachers are equally concerned about pupils, but that this concern stems from very different sources for these two groups of teachers. It may be that preservice teachers view these factor items from the vantage point of the pupils in the class they observe or student teach. This would not be surprising, for preservice teachers have been pupils most of their lives and are still more nearly students than teachers. It may be that in reporting Student Needs (Impact) Concerns what the preservice teacher is actually expressing is Self-Concerns. The inservice teacher, on the other hand, views these Pupil Impact Concerns factor items from his vantage point as a teacher. He probably identifies with the teacher role to a far greater extent than he does with the pupil role.

A third explanation is that the Impact Concern factor scores are influenced by social desirability. It is certainly true that lack of concern about pupils is socially undesirable. Two pieces of evidence support this explanation. First, the fact that Impact Concern factor scores were higher for both preservice and inservice teachers than were their scores on either of the other two factors. Second, a minor study

showed that Impact Concern scores were highly correlated with social desirability ratings made by a group of 7 psychologists.

The fourth explanation offered is that all teachers are quite altruistic and that they are all truly concerned about pupils. There are no differences between inservice and preservice teachers, either in their concerns about the individual needs of pupils or in the way they act on these concerns.

The fifth explanation, probably the most realistic one and the one in which we have greatest faith, is that both preservice and inservice teachers express concern about their impact on pupils, either 1) because they are altruistic; 2) because they are conforming to the implicit teachers' code; or 3) because they identify differentially with teachers and pupils in the teaching situation, BUT that teachers who are concerned about themselves as well are less able to act on their concern about pupils than are teachers who are not concerned about their self-survival. If this explanation is true, then preservice and inservice teachers would not necessarily be expected to differ with regard to the amount of Impact Concern reported. However, it is our belief that differences in teaching are related to the relationship between Impact-Concern and Self-Concern that coexist in individual teachers. That is, teachers for whom Self-Concern is as high or higher than Impact Concern will focus less on individual pupils' needs than would teachers for whom Self-Concerns are less pronounced.

Still and all, we find the result that teachers in all stages of training and teaching may well be the kinds of people whose basic concern

in teaching is the welfare of individual pupils very encouraging, regardless of the innuendos that may be involved.

Summary

Studies of the Teacher Concerns Statement and the Teacher Concerns Checklist have led to the conclusion that teachers are concerned about at least four basic kinds of concern--concern about self-survival, about teaching, about impact on pupils and about the teaching situation. The first three became apparent using the TCS and the last found definition in the TCCL-B. All of these concerns are vital and important. However, in our model of intrapersonal change, we have included only concern about self, about task and about impact upon pupils, since concerns about the situation can probably be resolved only by either actual changes in the situation or by changes in the person who then acts to change the situation. As a result, the model Frances Fuller will describe to you includes only concerns about self, task and impact on pupils and does not include situational concerns.

Conclusion

The highlights of our research have been discussed. Our experiences in the search for truth about the concerns of teachers, a search that has been pursued for a decade, have by necessity, involved the search for a viable research tool for measuring concerns. This search is reminiscent of the rat lost in a complex maze. By all rights our efforts should have been extinguished long ago in view of the measurement difficulties encountered. Continued persistence would have been

pure madness were it not for one strong shared basic belief. We believe that within these concerns lies the key to unlock and harness the teacher's motivation to learn and change, and his satisfaction about this learning and the changing. Without this element, what has been accomplished thus far would have been only an academic exercise.

The psychological literature on motivation is vast, the largest portion being about animals other than human beings. What is sadly lacking is information about what motivates specific people in specific situations to learn specific things. The specific skills and attitudes are those that are of concern to teachers. By identifying the concerns felt by preservice and inservice teachers about their teaching, we hope to give teacher educators access to knowledge about this internal motivation in order to help them teach teachers what teachers need to know.

Invitation to Participate in On-Going Research

The Teacher Concerns Checklist (TCCL), developed over the past two years promises to be a viable research instrument, largely because of its improvement over the earlier Teacher Concerns Statement in terms of reliability and increased ease in scoring. The TCCL-B is presently undergoing its fourth revision under the direction of Dr. Gary D. Borich, Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas at Austin. In the attached handout, he invites you to take part in its further development. Both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies are planned and printouts of scores will be distributed free of charge to all participating groups.

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